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INDIA V. POLITICAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS: MEDIEVAL PERIOD TO THE 13TH CENTURY
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The first political and military footholds of the Muslims in the subcontinent proper were in Sind, and at Multan in the middle Indus valley, secured in the early 8th century C.E., and were the work of troops from the Arab heartlands. We do not know whether any Persians played any specific part in the ensuing three centuries of Muslim rule there, but whilst Sind remained under Abbasid control, it did act as a channel for the transmission of Indian learning into the caliphate; the first Islamic *zij* or astronomical handbook with tables, the *Zij al-Arkand*, was probably written in Sind in 735 and was based on a Sanskrit astronomical work composed by Brahmagupta in C.E. 665 (D. A. King and J. Samsó, "Zīdj," *EI*2; Sezgin, *GAS* VI, p. 120). It was probably through Sind that the Barmakids (q.v.), ministers to Hārun al-Rašid (q.v.), who, with their family origins as custodians of a Buddhist monastery at Balkh, had ancestral connections with the Indian religious world, reportedly sent Muslim physicians to India in order to study medical lore there and brought Indian scholars to Baghdad for translating and transmitting Sanskrit works of learning (Biruni, tr. Sachau, I, pp. xxxii-xli). These connections were intermittent and on a small scale, but some works translated from Sanskrit

were certainly known to the scholar Abu Ray-ḥān Biruni (q.v.; d. 1048) in his native Khwarazm before he embarked on gathering materials for his *India* (see below) (Biruni, tr. Sachau, I, pp. xxxv-xl).

Where Iranian peoples did without doubt impinge on the Indian world at this early period was first, through maritime contacts, and second, through land contacts along the northwestern fringes of the subcontinent, the mountainous eastern rim of the Irano-Afghan plateau. Since Sasanian times, Persians from the Persian Gulf shores had been trading from ports like Sirāf with peninsular India, with the western coast from Gujarat down to Konkan and also with Malabar on the eastern coast. The *nāḵodā* or sea captain Bozorg b. Šahriyār was a native of Rāmhormoz in Ḵuzestān but was probably based on Sirāf. He wrote his collection of tales, the *Ketāb ʿajāʾeb al-Hend*, in around 953, and mentions in this several fellow-mariners who traded out of Sirāf to the western coast of India, to Ceylon (Sarandib), and into the Bay of Bengal (*baḥr Harkand*; Wink, I, pp. 67-72).

The land frontier marked off the Iranian from the Indian political and cultural worlds, with regions like Makrān and Kikān in what is now Pakistani Baluchistan, and Zamindāvar, Zābolestān, and Kabul in what is now eastern Afghanistan, making up the intermediate zone; all these regions, and even Sind, were often reckoned by the Islamic geographers as extensions of the vast province of Khorasan which was indeed, from the points of view of topography, climate, and habitat, substantially the case. Muslim raids into Zamindāvar and Zābolestān began soon after the Arabs marched into Sistan during ʿOṯmān's caliphate; and for two centuries troops from Khorasan, Arabs, settled there, and Persian *mawāli* or clients combated there the local rulers, the Zunbils, who may have arisen from the Chionites-Hephthalites (see CHIONITES and HEPHTHALITES) who had dominated eastern Afghanistan and northwestern India during the 5th and 6th centuries C.E. The Zunbils' cult of the god Zun or Žun, whose shrine was set on a sacred mountain in Zamindāvar, was clearly not Zoroastrian or Buddhist but probably had links with the Indian religious world; Marquart surmised that it was connected with the shrine of the Sun God Āditya at Multan (Marquart and de Groot, pp. 280-81, 287-88). To the north lay the kingdom of Kabul, where from the mid-9th century there reigned a dynasty, called by Biruni the Hendušāhis and by the Indian historian Kalhana the Śāhis, whose territories stretched from the Kabul river valley into the Punjab as far as the Chenab (Čenāb) river, forming a powerful block against Muslim expansion into India. Despite early raids

mounted by the Muslims from Sistan, no sustained attack on the Hendušāhis was made till Saffarid times, with raids by Yaʿqub b. Lay*t* in 870 and by his brother ʿAmr in around 893; after this last one, presents of idols of an unmistakably Indian religious nature were forwarded to Baghdad, where they caused a sensation (Abdur Rahman, pp. 101-5, 110-13; Bosworth, 1994, pp. 100, 218). Even then, it was not until a century later, with the establishment of the Ghaznavid amir Sebüktegin in Ḡazni (q.v.; also Ḡazna and Ghazna), that Kabul finally passed politically from the Indian to the Muslim sphere of influence. Long before Kabul was Islamized, it had, however, been regarded as a major entrepôt (*forza* in the terminology of the Muslim geographers) for the products of India, comprising aloes wood, coconuts, saffron, and the medicament myrobalanus (Ebn Ḵordāḏbeh, p. 38). The mercantile community there was a mixed one of Indians and Muslims; the *Ḥodud al-ʿālam* (982) records that there were idol temples at Kabul and that these were of such fame and holiness as to be frequented by Indian monarchs in order to legitimize their rule (*Ḥodūd al-ʿālam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 111).

The constituting in the later 4th/10th century of the Ghaznavid amirate, later sultanate, in eastern Afghanistan (see GHAZNAVIDS) swept away the survivals of Indian cults and customs from Kabul and other regions of eastern Afghanistan, and the stage was now set for some two centuries of expeditions led by the Ghaznavids from Ḡazni down to the plains of India. Although a sultan like Maḥmud achieved a great reputation as the hammer of the pagan Hindus, the prime motive behind the raids was gold and the taking of slaves rather than conversion. The sultan was quite happy to recruit unconverted Hindu troops into his army and to let them loose on the local people of his realm. Indian troops also came to form part of the sultans' élite palace guard—whether they were required to become Muslims is unclear—and were on occasion regarded as a counterbalance to the otherwise dominant position of the Turks there (Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, p. 110; Wink, II, pp. 119-20). Spoils from Hindu temples were used to finance the Ghaznavid war machine and building programs at Ḡazni and elsewhere. Finds of Indian figures and other spolia made by the Italian Archeological Mission in Afghanistan at Ḡazni in the 1950s indicate that these may have been incorporated into palaces as trophies of war; the contemporary historian ʿOtbi states that gold from statues plundered from Somnath (Sumanāt; see below) was used to adorn the ʿArus al-Falak "Bride of Heaven" mosque which Maḥ-mud then founded at Ḡazni (Scerrato, pp. 39-40).

The Ghaznavid plunder raids are well documented from the reigns of Sebuktegin, Maḥmud, and Masʿud, and sporadically thereafter. Maḥmud penetrated as far as Som-nath in the Kathiawar peninsula of western India, into the southern fringes of Kashmir and to Kanauj, Gwalior, and Kalinjar in the Ganges–Jumna plain, whilst Masʿud's general Aḥmad Ināltegin reached as far east as Benares. Since no permanent occupation of such territories was either envisaged or feasible, there can have been little or no cultural or religious interaction between the two opposing faiths and cultures at this time, since neither side was interested in the other. The great exception to this dearth of intellectual curiosity is of course, the towering figure of Abu Reyḥān Biruni, whose accompanying of the Ghaznavid armies into India enabled him to learn Sanskrit and converse with local pandits on religious and philosophical topics, the fruits of this being an Arabic translation of Patānjali's *Yogasutra*s and, above all, his remarkable examination of the faiths and philosophies of the Indians, his *India* (see BIRUNI viii. INDOLOGY). We know little about specific centers in India where Biruni gathered Indian lore, but at some point in Maḥmud's reign, probably between 1019-20 and 1023-24, he was at the fortress of Nandana or Nardin in the Punjab, in the Salt Range to the north of the Jhelum river, and made calculations concerning the dimensions of the earth (Baloch, passim). However, Biruni founded no school and had no successors; it was to be some three or four centuries before the two great faiths of Hinduism and Islam were to have any influence on each other.

Ghaznavid India continued, meanwhile, to be essentially made up of Sind, by now a cultural backwater whose political frontiers remained fixed as they had been since the 8th century, and the Punjab, with its capital at Lahore. It was the task of the governor of India, who functioned as commander-in-chief of the army there, to exact tribute from those Indian princes who could be sufficiently harried and overawed to make them pay up in gold, slaves, elephants, etc. Diplomatic communications with these princes must have been handled from both Lahore and the central royal administration (*divān*) in Ḡazni; concerning the latter organ of administration, it is recorded that Masʿud's commander in India, Tilak, had originally been employed in the Divān as a translator from Indian language (*hendui*, *hendavi*) and as a secretary for Indian affairs, and another Indian, Birbāl, is mentioned here in this same role (Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāż, pp. 522-23). The establishment of something like a provincial capital in Lahore must have entailed the implanting there of a nucleus of Persian secretaries and financial officials, who contributed to Lahore's eventual role as a center for Persian culture (see

below). Early in Masʿud's reign we hear of a Qāżi Abu'l-Ḥasan of Shiraz being sent out there to head the civilian side of the local administration, including the collection of the regular taxation; he had a background of earlier service under the Buyids (Bayhaqi, pp. 349-51, 515-16; Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, pp. 76-77). In later Ghaznavid times, from the mid-11th century onwards, Lahore seems to have developed as a second capital for the sultanate as a whole. It acquired a lively Persian culture, with circles of poets and other literary men around the governors, who were often princes from the royal house (Bosworth, *Later Ghaznavids*, pp. 76-77). This cultural florescence of Lahore continued until the end of the Ghaznavid rule in the Punjab, with significant Persian poets like Masʿud-e Saʿd-e Salmān and Abu'l-Faraj Runi (qq.v.), who were both born in Lahore; in fact, Lahore seems to have been a more vibrant center of Persian culture at this time than Ḡazni itself and to have continued so until the end of the dynasty. Under the later Ghaznavid sultans Bahrāmšāh (q.v.) and Ḵosrowšāh, the translator into Persian of *Kalila wa Demna*, Abu'l-Maʿāli Naṣr-Allāh, whose version was to be regarded as a model of Persian prose style for centuries to come, was a secretary and for a while head of the Divān in Lahore (Bosworth, *Later Ghaznavids*, pp. 127-28). It was probably Ḵosrowšāh who was forced to abandon Ḡazni and eastern Afghanistan under pressure from the Ghurids and the Oghuz who had moved from Khorasan when the former Saljuq commander Ay Aba assumed power there (ibid., pp. 122-23). The last of the dynasty, Ḵosrow Malek, ruled only in the Punjab but had around him, on the evidence of the compilers of biographical anthologies of poetry (*tadkera*s) like ʿAwfi (q.v.), a brilliant circle of Persian poets and literary men, and he vigorously defended the frontiers of his principality against pressure from Indian rulers like the rajas of Kashmir before being overwhelmed by the Ghurids (ibid., pp. 123-31). It was to be these successors to the Ghaznavids, the Ghurid brothers Giyāṯ-al-Din Moḥammad and Moʿezz-al-Din Moḥammad, who would truly consolidate Muslim rule in northwestern India when the latter defeated the Čawhān monarch Prithvī Rājā in 1192 and occupied Delhi (see GHURIDS). It was this rule which now provided a base for expansion as far as Bengal on the eastern borders of the subcontinent and into the northern fringes of the Deccan (q.v.), with the establishment and dissemination throughout Muslim India of a Persian culture which all future rulers, whether ethnically Turkish or Afghan, were to adopt and encourage at their courts (Wink, *Al-Hind*, II, pp. 135 ff.).

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